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**DAVIES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 30, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Hunter Lucas of Davies High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Lucas is the first Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Davies High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the racecourse, distinguishes Lucas as North Dakota's best high school boys cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Lucas joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep., San Luis Obispo, Calif.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-6, 130-pound senior raced to the Class A individual state championship this past season with a course-record time of 15:30.4. Lucas also won the Shocky Strand Invitational, the Bill Jansen Blue-White Invitational, the Andrew Nelson Invitational and the Eastern Dakota Conference championships.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Lucas has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army, a food pantry and a learn-to-skate program. "Hunter leads through his work ethic and positive attitude," said Davies coach Jason Holland. "His will to compete and get better is shown through his dedication and discipline on and off the competition field."

Lucas has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Minnesota this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Lucas joins Gatorade North Dakota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Sam Clausnitzer (2015-16 & 2014-15, Bismarck High School), Matt Gotta (2013-14, Bismarck High School), Jake Leingang (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Bismarck High School), Brett Kelly (2009-10, Century High School), and Joash Osoro (2008-09 & 2007-08, Bismarck High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Lucas will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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